

Lecture 15: New Testament Survey

2 – The Holy Spirit

The Church cannot function without the Spirit of God.

In the Book of Acts, the apostles depended entirely upon the guidance, power, and authority of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned nearly fifty times in the Book of Acts.

Nine Roles of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts:

1. **Chief Commander** – (Acts 2:1)
2. **Giver of Prophetic Utterance** – (Acts 2:4; 13:2; 28:25)
3. **Fulfiller of Prophecy** – (Acts 2:17-18)
4. **The Father's Promise** – (Acts 2:33)
5. **The Gift of God** – (Acts 2:38; 8:15; 28:25)
6. **The One Who Establishes Churches** – (Acts 9:31)
7. **The One Who Confirms the Word** – (Acts 10:38, 44, 47)
8. **The Rain from Heaven** – (Acts 10:38–11:18; 11:2; 10:44–47)
9. **The Giver of Joy** – (Acts 13:52)

The Church Was Birthed Through Prayer

the Church was established through prayer, and thereafter, prayer became a foundational key.

In the Book of Acts, Christians breathed in an atmosphere of prayer.

They believed in the power of prayer.

They began every task with prayer, continued in prayer, and brought every work to completion through prayer.

More than half of the references to prayer are accompanied by accounts of miracles—as if prayer and miracles are joined together like cloth and thread.

In the early chapters, the Church is praying, and the Holy Spirit falls upon them.

In chapter 3, prayer is mentioned again, and a man lame from birth is healed.

They pray, and the Holy Spirit descends with power, and the place is shaken.

Peter prays, and a woman named Tabitha, who was dead, is raised to life.

The Church is found praying again, and Peter is miraculously delivered from prison.

Prayer in the Writings of Luke

Saint Luke, the beloved physician, gives great emphasis to prayer in both of his writings.

If we examine the Gospel according to Saint Luke, we find that no other Gospel writer describes the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ as deeply as Luke does.

Likewise, in the Acts of the Apostles, prayer is mentioned in more than thirty references.

Out of the twenty-eight chapters, seventeen contain accounts related to prayer.

Let the Church of our day learn again to live, breathe, and move in prayer, for therein lies her strength, her joy, and her victory.

Through Prayer: The Transformation of Saul and Others

It was through prayer that the transformation of Saul took place. Now, many suppose that his name was changed to Paul; yet this is not entirely accurate. He possessed two names from the beginning: *Saul*, his Hebrew name, and *Paul*, his Roman name. Likewise, by prayer was Cornelius converted.

When Paul and Silas were on their way to the place of prayer, a slave girl, possessed by a spirit of divination, was set free. Again, while they were imprisoned, Paul and Silas prayed

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and sang hymns unto the Lord, and behold—the foundations of the prison were shaken. It was by prayer that the sick were healed and set free.

The Epistles of Paul and the Book of Acts

Now concerning the epistles of Saint Paul and their relationship to the Acts of the Apostles: when the Apostle was in Corinth (Acts 18:1–18), it is likely that he penned the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians from there. Yet, curiously, Saint Luke makes no mention of these writings.

Scholars have offered various explanations for this omission:

- Perhaps Luke was unaware that Paul had written epistles, for he had never met him. But this seems improbable—for if Luke had never known Paul, how then could he write of him with such great detail and precision?
- Or perhaps Luke knew Paul wrote letters, but he had never read them—for during the times they travelled together, Paul may not have written any. But this assumption is weak, for Paul maintained constant contact with the churches and often wrote even amidst his travels.
- Or perhaps—and this appears most reasonable—Luke *did* know of Paul's letters and had even made use of them. Indeed, there is considerable agreement between the themes in Paul's epistles and the narratives in Acts.

And yet Luke, though aware, chose not to mention these letters—not out of ignorance, but by intent. His purpose was to portray Paul primarily as a missionary, not as an author. This interpretation seems the most sound and fitting.

